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has notable defects, as no doubt the author would be most ready to admit. It is a fragment. It is abstract in statement. While the thought could not be called immature, it is certainly in many parts unma-tured, and could undoubtedly have been much improved by further study. But the book also has decided merits. It is refreshing to meet with new illustrations of an old subject, to hear an author speak in words other than the old cant phrases that have so long re-echoed through economic literature. The treatment is suggestive and at times illuminating, and the reader must lay the little book down with the sincere regret that the author has found it impossible, in the press of other duties, to complete it as it was originally planned.

FRANK A. FETTER.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY.

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*La Lettre de Foire a Ypres au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Contribution a l'étude des papiers de crédit.* Par G. DES MAREZ, Archiviste adjoint de la ville de Bruxelles. Bruxelles: H. Lamertin, 1901. 8vo, pp. 292.

THIS very interesting work is based on the study of nearly eight thousand documents which the author recently discovered in the archives of the city of Ypres. These documents are, with a few excep-tions, *lettres de foire*, written in the French language; all are dated during the years 1249 to 1291, though the greater number fall within the last ten years of the period. No other collection so extensive is known to exist.

The *lettre de foire* was a species of credit paper that came into use among Germanic peoples near the beginning of the thirteenth cen-tury, soon after bills of exchange rose to importance among the Italian bankers and were introduced by them to the other Latin peoples. It was known in England under the name *littera obligatoria*. For three or four centuries it was the prevailing mode among the northern nations of giving documentary evidence of a debt. It was not finally supplanted by the more convenient bills of exchange until the fairs, with which it was closely connected and from which it obtained its name, had also disappeared.

Sample letters, each printed entire, occupy over half of the book. Here is one of them; the italics are the author's introductory sum-mary:

*Gérard de Belgoer se reconnaît débiteur de 12 liv. d'Artois envers Aubri de Reims, bourgeois de Saint-Quentin, payables à la foire de Provins en mai, au créancier ou à son commandement.*

Octobre, 1249.

Sachent tout chil qui sunt et qui a venir sunt et qui cheste presente chartre partie veront e oront que Gherart de Belgoer doit 12 lb. dart. a Aubri de Reims, borgois de Sen Quentin, u a son commandement, qui cheste presente chartre partie apportera, a paier a Provins en Mai, le premiere que nos attendons dedens paiement. Chou connoissent eskevin de Ypre, Hugheloot Fal-lais et Johan fix Andries. Chou fu fait en lan del incarnation nostre Singor Jhesu M. CC. XLIX, el mois de Octobre.

Chirographe en parchemin. Archives communales d'Ypres. Collection des chirographes, 1249-1291.

The debtor appeared in person before the magistrates and made an oral statement of his obligation. This was put into writing, usually by a clerk. The debtor as well as the creditor and the attesting magistrates were all named in the third person. No signature was attached to the letter, except that after March, 1283, the letter bore on the back the personal emblem or hieroglyphic of the clerk who engrossed it. The number of magistrates attesting a letter was nearly always two, though sometimes as many as five or six. The letter was written in duplicate on a single sheet of parchment which was then cut apart with indentations; one copy was given to the creditor and the other retained by the magistrates. The copy given to the creditor bore on the back the name of the attesting magistrates, while the copy retained by the magistrates bore the name of the creditor. The author takes pains to say that there was in use, even in Germanic countries, a *lettre privée* or *debita non recognita per scabinos*.

The first few words contain the phrase which still survives in our "Know all men by these presents." In nearly all of the letters, however, it is cut short—"Sachent tout, etc."—and in the latest ones the "etc." is also omitted. The phrase "u a son commandement," corresponds to our "or order" and provided for the transfer of the claim, though the clause following, corresponding to our "or bearer," leaves one in doubt about the procedure necessary for the transfer. The author concludes that the bearer, when not the original creditor, was required to show that he had received authority from the original creditor; the transfer of the latter must have been formal (*conventionnelle*) to carry with it right to collect the debt. The author gives no

hint what the formality was, except to say that endorsement was not practised at that time.

The documents under consideration, unlike the bill of exchange, did not necessarily require payment in money. Goods of any kind might be promised, either absolutely or as alternative to the payment of money; likewise services or the use of property. In fact a contract of almost any kind might take the form of a *lettre de foire*.

The debt was usually made payable at a fair (*foire* or *fieste*) at a time and place named, sometimes with the qualification, *le prochain que nous attendons a venir*. Merchants from various parts of Europe met at these northern fairs to pay and collect debts as well as to buy and sell goods. This arrangement largely obviated the necessity of carrying sums of money from one fair to another and permitted much business to be done without the use of any money whatever. Security other than the word of the debtor was frequently used. In the letters the statement of the debt is sometimes followed by a guarantee of payment by one or more persons named. Two or more persons were sometimes named as debtors, when only one was the real debtor, the others being only guarantors. The book gives the text of a letter in which two citizens of Ypres promised to pay a certain widow 21 Artois pounds. Then follows the text of another letter, of the same date and attested by the same magistrates, in which another party promises to pay the two citizens the 21 pounds they have promised to pay the widow. The first letter is only the promise of the guarantors and does not contain the name of the real debtor. Then certain property may be named as security, most often wine, wool, cloth, and city real estate. The merchants frequently owned houses and lands, and appear to have mortgaged them freely to secure their debts.

The law and the practice of the thirteenth century were less tender of the debtor than they are today; not often was anything stipulated in his behalf. On the other hand the interests of the creditor were guarded in many ways. The *lettre de foire* was a confession of debt, and if the debt was not paid at maturity the creditor was not put to the trouble of proving his claim; he only needed to exhibit his copy of the letter to the authorities and they would without further formality proceed to collect the debt, if necessary by seizing the goods or person of the debtor. In many of the letters the debtors waived privileges which they might otherwise have claimed, such as taking sanctuary, trial by the laws of their own cities, or exemption because of going on a crusade.

The author has done his work well ; he is cautious in drawing conclusions, his style leaves nothing to be desired, and he lets the letters tell their own story as far as possible. The book, especially in the 161 sample letters it contains, gives information on many features of economic life in the thirteenth century, notably about the fairs, the kinds of money in use, and the residence and rank of the merchants that were prominent in Flemish trade ; some light is given on the relation of the nobility and the church to the commercial life of the time and on the conditions of landholding in the cities. The book is thoroughly indexed.

F. R. CLOW.

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*La main d'oeuvre industrielle dans l'ancienne Grèce.* Par PAUL GUIRAUD. Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres. Paris : Felix Alcan, 1900. 8vo, pp. 212.

THE economic features of the past have of late been studied with profit both in the extension of knowledge of past epochs and in comprehension of our own age. Some of the latest German scholars wish to picture the past in lifelike colors and attempt to explore the unknown by means of the known. Others prefer, for the purpose of illustrating a certain feature of economic life, for instance, to employ the safer method of bringing before us all that the original authorities contain upon the subject, letting these instances speak for themselves and the reader draw his conclusions as he proceeds. To this last class of investigators Professor Guiraud belongs. His book is rather a careful series of instances drawn from the sources and placed in such a relation as to make a pleasant narrative, rather than any attempt to present new ideas by means of interpretation or special suggestion. In twelve chapters somewhat crowded with incidents to illustrate the industrial life of ancient Greece, Professor Guiraud brings before us the three classes engaged in industry of every kind, the free, the freed, and the slaves. The author shows conclusively that Greece possessed an extensive industry depending to some extent upon slave labor, but more upon the skill and ardor of the free and the freedman, who took to the crafts as his natural opportunity for earning a living. A large part in the industrial and commercial life, especially in Athens, was played by the alien element, and we are inclined to agree with the author that to them should be attributed more importance in the